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E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 2006

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
General Wald: US May Strike Iran's Nuclear Facilities -
Sabah
EU Softens against Iran - Aksam
Talabani: Saddam Can Be Tried in Kurdistan - Bugun
If Freed, Iraq's Aziz Wants Asylum in Croatia - Tercuman
Serbian Daily: General Mladic Hides in Russia - Sabah
UN: 400,000 Pakistani Earthquake Survivors Face Death from
Hunger, Illness - Turkiye
US Will Ease Visa Procedures - Bugun
US Supreme Court Allows Euthanasia in Oregon - Hurriyet

OPINION MAKERS
European Parliament to Investigate 'CIA Planes' - Cumhuriyet
'Hawkish' Livni to Replace Shalom in Israel - Cumhuriyet
Livni Israel's Second Golda Meir - Zaman
Hamane: Iran Will Continue Scientific Nuclear Progress -
Radikal
Iranian State TV: Ahmadinejad to Visit Syria - Yeni Safak
HRW: US is Behind Torture in Iraq - Yeni Safak
US to Shift to 'Hospitable' Visa Procedures - Yeni Safak
UNDP Chief Dervis among Candidates to Replace UNSYG Annan -
Radikal

BRIEFING

Ankara Warns General Wald against Striking Iran: A column in 'Sabah' claims that during his meetings in Ankara, EUCOM Deputy Commander General Charles Wald told the Turks that the United States had no intention of waging war against Iran, but if the diplomatic process is blocked, precision strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities may be considered. Turks told Wald that such strikes could lead to Iran-supported terrorist attacks in Western cities. High-level Turkish authorities believe that the US will not venture a military operation against Iran, and instead aims to corner Iran with such messages. Ankara has also implied that Turkey is ready for mediation between Iran and the West with regard to inspection of Iran's nuclear facilities if Tehran ends negotiations with the EU. General Wald also said at a reception during his stay in Ankara that US-Turkey military ties are the best they've been in ten years, says "Sabah."

Avivi: Turkey, Israel Have Parallel Views on Iran: Israeli Ambassador to Turkey, Pinhas Avivi, said Israel and Turkey shared 'parallel views' regarding Iran, says "Milliyet." Avivi warned that Iran will pose a big threat against Turkey if Tehran acquires the capacity to produce nuclear weapons, and develops missiles with a 4,000 km range. Israel is satisfied with Turkish efforts to ease regional tensions, Avivi noted, adding that Turkey has been using every opportunity to convey its concerns to Tehran.

Talabani Wants Coalition Government in Iraq: In an exclusive interview with the mass-appeal daily "Bugun," Iraqi President Jalal Talabani said that he will accept the position of 'official' President of Iraq for the next four years only if a coalition government is formed in the

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country, with participation of all groups. The Iraqi parliament will convene 15 days after the announcement of election results to select its speaker and a president for the country. Talabani's candidate for the Iraqi Parliament speaker is Sunni politician Tarik al-Hashimi, the leader of the Iraq Islam Party. Hashimi has close and friendly ties with Turkey, and is the 'favorite' of the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA.) Talabani will be the sole candidate for Iraq Presidency. Talabani says his Sunni vice-president may be Iyad Samarrai, and wants Shiite Adil Abdulmahdi as his other deputy. The Iraq Constitution stipulates that the president have two aides -- a Sunni and a Shiite. Iraqis will go to the ballot box again in the four months following the formation of a government in Iraq to vote for constitutional changes. The first half of 2006 will show whether Iraq will proceed toward a better future, or toward civil war, says the interview.

HRW 2005 Report: Torture Declines, Anti-Reform Elements Still Strong in Turkey: New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) praised human rights developments in Turkey in its annual 2005 report, saying that the government showed 'some commitment' to reform, Turkish papers and news agencies report. The HRW report, however, added that the government was inhibited by anti-reform elements within the judiciary, police, and military. The HRW said that there had been progress in fighting torture in Turkey last year, with the number of reports of ill-treatment in police stations was lower. Police compliance with laws and regulations is generally good, it added. Reports of ill-treatment continued to decline, including the right to see a lawyer from the first moments of detention. The report, however, stressed that little progress had been made in ensuring freedom of language and free speech. The report underlined that women wearing headscarves continue to be excluded from higher education, the civil service, and political life. The HRW said that scores of people had been charged with speech-related offenses, and threatened with imprisonment. The HRW report also stated that more evidence came to light in 2005 which indicated that torture and mistreatment were a deliberate part of the Bush administration's counterterrorism strategy.

New Efforts to Make US a Welcoming Country: Turkish papers report that in 2006, the United States will launch new efforts to ease the visa restrictions following 9/11. Reports say that 'friendly' customs officials and video messages will greet visitors to the US, and video-conference will be used for interviews. The Islamist-oriented "Yeni Safak" wonders whether the video-interviews will be added to intelligence files on visa applicants.

UN Agencies on Turkish Fight against Bird Flu: The World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Animal Health Organization have all voiced full confidence in Turkey, stating that Turkey is capable of beating the bird flu outbreak, papers report. The current bird flu outbreak in the country has claimed the lives of four children in the east of the country. The virus has also spread to the west of Turkey. More than 1 million birds have been culled across Turkey in efforts to contain the outbreak. WHO Contagious Diseases official Margaret Chan said the Turkish government has been 'acting transparently, and is open to any proposal from international agencies.' FAO Chief Veterinary Officer Joseph Domenech said that the geography and climate of eastern Turkey was suitable for the spread of the virus, and that it will take time to achieve results in the region. In a statement issued by Turkey's National Avian Flu

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Coordination Center, as of Thursday, a total of 24 locations for suspected avian flu had been identified in laboratories in chickens and wild birds in 13 provinces. The statement emphasized that a further 59 locations existed today. Meanwhile, the independent Al-Sharqiyah TV in Baghdad reported yesterday that an Iraqi woman died of bird flu in a village in Suleymaniye in northern Iraq. The agriculture ministry in the Iraqi Kurdistan region said that measures were taken to prevent the spread of the epidemic, particularly in border areas with Turkey.

Ozkok Visits Paris, French FM Due in Turkey: The Chief of Turkish General Staff (TGS) General Hilmi Ozkok arrived in Paris on Thursday on a three-day official visit as the a guest of his French counterpart Henri Bentegeat to discuss bilateral military issues, "Radikal" reports. On the other hand, French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy will visit Turkey in early February to discuss mainly economic issues, says the report.

PACE to discuss Kurdish Issue in Paris: The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) has begun discussing the situation of the Kurdish communities in Iraq, Syria and Iran in a meeting held in Paris on Wednesday, "Cihan News Agency" (CNA) reports. The gathering, originally scheduled for last autumn, was postponed after objections by the AKP lawmaker Murat Mercan, the head of the Turkish delegation to PACE, claiming that the majority of the speakers at the meeting had been selected from supporters of the outlawed PKK. Taking Mercan's objection into consideration, the Committee on Culture, Science and Education invited 'impartial' and 'moderate' experts to the conference. A report on the Kurds by British Council of Europe member, Lord Russell Johnston, will also be discussed during the meeting.

Freed Turkish Paragliders Return Home from Iran: Islamist rebels in southeastern Iran released three Turkish paragliders they had kidnapped in late December, because the Turks were Sunni Muslims, papers report. The paragliders returned home on Thursday.

CD Manufacturer Sentenced for Music Piracy: "Hurriyet" reports that a Turkish court has sentenced a CD manufacturer to 67 months in jail, and a fine of 160,000 lira for music piracy. The report says that it is the first time a manufacturer has been jailed in Turkey for piracy, apart

from street sellers who have been given minor penalties in past years.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq, Iran

"Iraq is Slipping Away"

Gunduz Aktan commented in the liberal-intellectual "Radikal" (1/19): "After every election in Iraq hopes for a democratic regime, and the end of terrorism and the Sunni insurgency falters. After the last elections, the attacks against the US troops and the Shiites increased. The US is withdrawing 20,000 of its troop from Iraq. This is an expected development. But the US has to announce the second part of its withdrawal within six months. At this point even the announcement of withdrawal will lead Iraq to disintegration. A US military official predicts that the Iraqi military will split along ethnic and tribal lines and will turn into armed gangs and militants. The US has been in close contact with the Sunni insurgents for some time, in an effort to separate the Sunni insurgents from Al-Qaeda militants. The US reprimands the Kurds and the Shiites for

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their efforts to leave Sunnis outside the coalition government. The seriousness of the crisis in Kirkuk is increasing immensely. Because of their support, the US had allowed Kurds to migrate to Tamim in large numbers. The Kurds also squeezed the Arab population out of Kirkuk and settled around 350,000 Kurds there. This illegal act is one of the main factors leading to the disintegration of Iraq. A result could be that the Sunnis and the Shiites join together against the Kurds, changing the direction of a possible civil war. Since the terrorist attacks have spread to Kirkuk, this possibility should not be ignored."

"To Depend on Iran"

Yilmaz Oztuna wrote in the conservative-nationalist "Turkiye" (1/19): "Turkey's stance against Iran is going to determine its future. In any case, the US will defeat Iran over its nuclear program. In the end, Turkey - based on its level of cooperation with the US -- could either join the super states, or slip towards Asia with the status of a rather poor, crowded and problematic country. What is the US planning in Iran? It is going to repeat its Afghanistan and Iraq act in Iran as well. But, it is not possible for the US to keep all of Iran under its military control. The US is going to apply a more developed plan there. And Russia and China will learn to be satisfied with verbal protests while they wait for their turns."

WILSON